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ABSTRACT

This document is a position paper prepared to assist teachers, administrators, and curriculum planners in general to determine direction and focus for their efforts in developing programs of physical education in elementary schools. The document is composed of a series of statements of belief on the following topics of physical education: the child and the need for instruction and instructors to consider the child's individuality and personal potential; the teacher and teacher preparation--centering on his or her need for understanding of the child; the criteria of an instructional program in physical education; the type of evaluation; time allotment, class size, teaching load, dress; equipment and facilities; and school related programs. (JA)

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Essentials of a Quality Elementary School Physical Education Program

A POSITION PAPER

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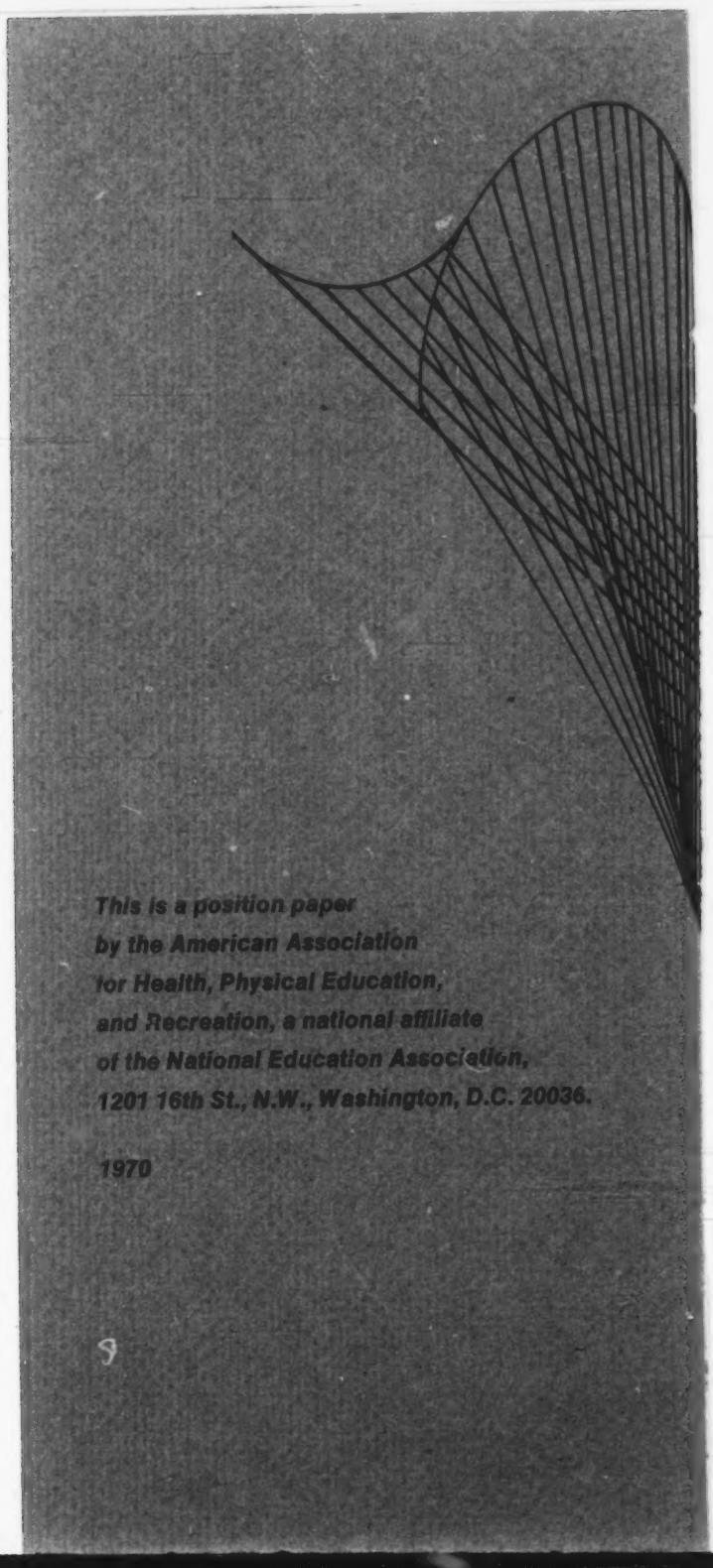

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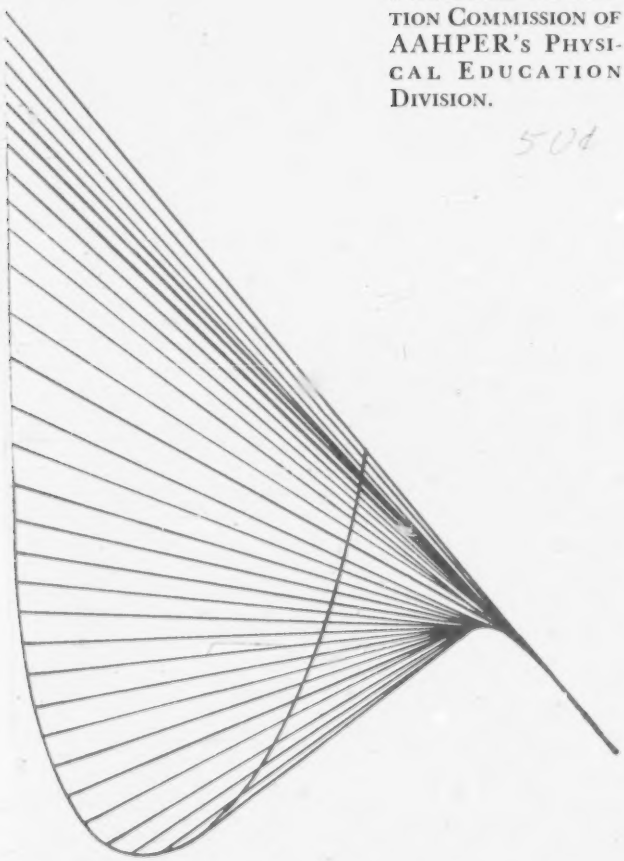
THIS POSITION STATEMENT WAS PREPARED TO ASSIST TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND CURRICULUM PLANNERS IN GENERAL TO DETERMINE DIRECTION AND FOCUS FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. IT WAS DEVELOPED BY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION COMMISSION OF AAHPER'S PHYSICAL EDUCATION DIVISION.



A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSITION PAPERS FROM THE ASSOCIATION ARE REPRESENTED IN THIS DOCUMENT, WITH MODIFICATIONS WHERE NECESSARY TO REFLECT WHAT MAY BE CONSIDERED THE CONTEMPORARY THINKING ABOUT PHYSICAL EDUCATION. OTHER STATEMENTS WERE DEVELOPED AS NEW BELIEFS WHICH WERE THOUGHT TO BE ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUANCE OF QUALITY PROGRAMS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE.

THE DOCUMENT WAS REVIEWED BY PARTICIPANTS AT THREE NATIONAL MEETINGS SPONSORED BY THE AAHPER: THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION, THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CITY AND COUNTY DIRECTORS OF HPER, AND THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DIVISION WORKSHOP WHICH WAS PART OF THE 1969 AAHPER CONVENTION HELD IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS. THE FINAL DOCUMENT WAS APPROVED BY THE AAHPER PHYSICAL EDUCATION DIVISION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION.

Foreword

Physical education is one of the most rapidly developing curricular areas in the elementary school program. The need for providing learning experiences in physical education to children has become universally recognized and significant changes are taking place in the content and teaching strategies of this field of study* □ When properly guided and developed, physical education becomes a purposeful and vital part of the children's elementary school education. It aids in the realization of those objectives concerned with the development of favorable self-image, creative expression, motor skills, physical fitness, knowledge and understanding of human movement □ In very real measure, the degree of success the elementary child experiences in his work and play is influenced by his ability to execute movement patterns effectively and efficiently. For the child, movement is one of the most used means of non-verbal communication and expression. It is one of the important avenues through which he forms impressions about himself and his environment □ In some observable and learned form, movement underlies nearly all of man's accomplishments. The child, to become a fully functioning individual, needs many opportunities to participate in well-conceived, well-taught learning experiences in physical education. To achieve this objective, the essentials of a quality program of physical education for the elementary school need to be identified □

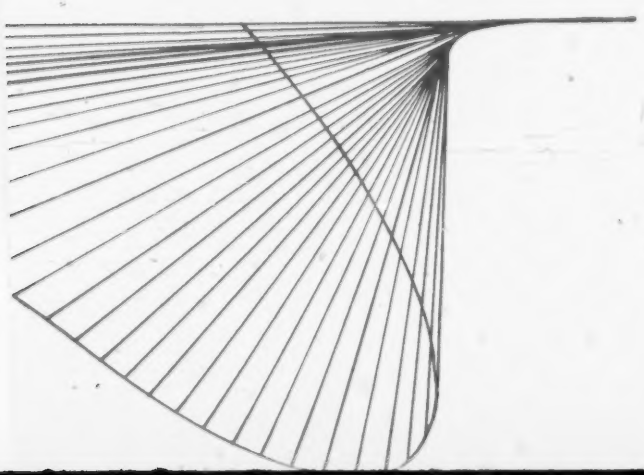
* *Promising Practices in Elementary School Physical Education*, AAHPER (Washington, D.C., 1969).

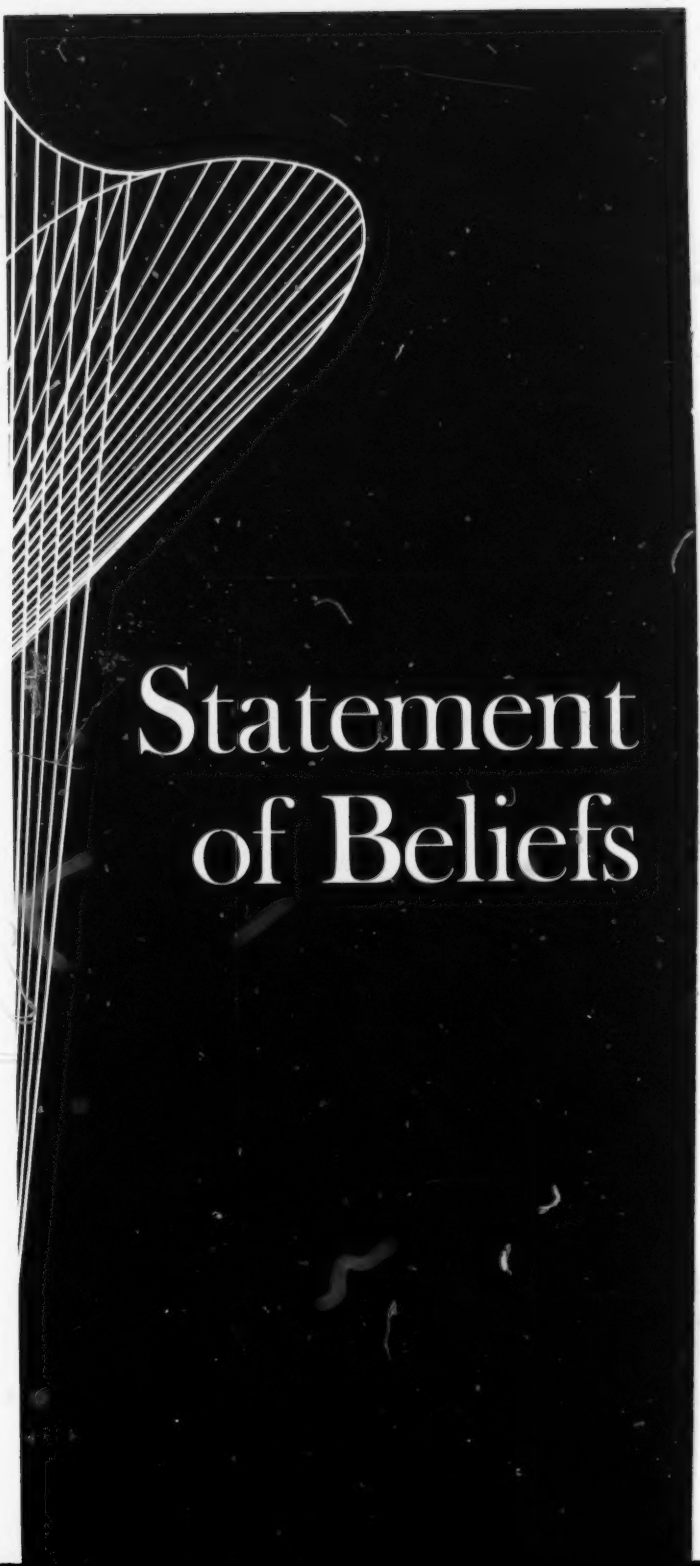
A Point of View

Physical education is an integral part of the total educational program. As such it must seek to contribute to the overall goals of the educational program of which it is a part.

Though these purposes and goals are often broadly conceived and include concern for the cognitive and affective fields, as well as for the psychomotor, they should serve as guidelines for determining the kind of physical education program offered in the elementary school.

In the continuing quest to make learning more relevant and personal to the child — and to realize more fully the goals of physical education — new developments in learning theories, structure of subject matter, and behavioral objectives must be constantly considered, evaluated, and implemented.





Statement of Beliefs

We believe: THE CHILD

1. Each child is a unique individual with differing physical, mental, emotional, and social needs.
2. Every child has the need and right to benefit from physical education experiences.
3. Through the teaching of carefully planned movement experiences the child:
   a. learns to express his understandings of himself and his environment.
   b. becomes more proficient in movement skills which allow him to participate more fully in a variety of life experiences.
   c. improves in muscular strength, endurance, flexibility, agility, balance and coordination, and in his knowledge and understanding of how these factors relate to life-long physical fitness.
4. Each child should have continuous learning experiences in physical education each year he is in school.

We believe: THE TEACHER

1. Teachers of elementary school physical education must understand human movement, child growth and development, current learning theories, and be able to work effectively with children.
2. A qualified elementary school physical education teacher should be an involved and contributing staff member of the elementary school.
3. To assure that the most meaningful learning takes place, both the physical education teacher and the classroom teacher

should work together to develop an understanding of the children and, through this understanding, should provide a program which is commensurate with the children's needs. Although the physical educator assumes the primary role in conducting the program, it is essential that he regard himself as one part of the total educational process.

When classroom teachers teach physical education it is imperative that they be provided with regular leadership and guidance from resource people who are qualified by education and experience in elementary school physical education.

4. In schools where differentiated staffing patterns are practiced, the value of auxiliary personnel to assist the physical education teacher should not be overlooked.
   a. The use of teacher aides and paraprofessionals as supporting staff can do much to create effective and purposeful teaching teams in physical education as well as in other subject areas.
   b. The unity of purpose and program can be enhanced when staffing patterns permit all teachers, including the physical education teacher, to plan and evaluate (and sometimes teach) as a team working toward common goals.
   c. Guidelines for the utilization of professional personnel (including the use of differentiated staffing) should be developed jointly by the physical education teachers and the school administration.

TEACHER PREPARATION

We believe:

1. Professional education background for the physical education teacher should be developed upon a liberal arts base of the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and biological sciences. Professional preparation courses should include:

a. study of child growth and development with an emphasis on motor development and learning.

b. study of the nature and function of human movement.

c. study of learning processes and factors that facilitate learning, and teaching strategies as they relate to learning outcomes.

d. study of development of curriculum to include movement experiences appropriate for all elementary school children.

e. study of early childhood and elementary school curriculum as a phase of continuing education.

f. directed laboratory experiences focusing on learning to critically observe the movement of children in an elementary school.[1]

2. Preparation for the classroom teacher should include an understanding of the relationship of physical and motor development to the total learning experience of the child. Course work in movement skills, methods, and content of elementary school physical education should be required. Laboratory experiences in working with young children in physical education are essential.

3. In-service opportunities should be provided frequently for all personnel concerned with physical education programs for children.

4. It is imperative that teachers of classes concerned with preservice and in-service education in physical education have had successful recent and continuing work with children.

5. Participation in local, state, and national organizations should be encouraged as a means of keeping informed of trends, issues, and new developments in the profession.

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[1] *Professional Preparation of the Elementary School Physical Education Teacher,* AAHPER (Washington, D.C., 1969).

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

We believe:

1. A well-conceived and well-executed program of physical education will contribute to the development of self-directed, self-reliant, and fully functioning individuals capable of living happy, productive lives in a democratic society.

2. A comprehensive physical education program for all children has as its foundation a common core of learning experiences. This common core of learning is concerned with efficient body management in a variety of movement situations. It serves the divergent needs of all pupils – the gifted, the slow learner, the handicapped, the culturally deprived, and the average – and is geared to the developmental needs of each child.

3. The program must be planned and conducted to provide each child with maximal opportunities for involvement in situations calling for mental, motor, and emotional responses which will result in optimal and desirable modifications in behavior: skills, knowledges, and attitudes.

4. A variety of learning experiences should be planned and carried out to emphasize the development of basic concepts, values, and behaviors associated with the ultimate goal for the physically educated person.

5. Curricular content should be so organized that levels of learning in attitudes, understandings,[2] and skills are recognized and can take place in a sequential and developmental arrangement.

6. The instructional program should be designed to: (1) encourage vigorous physical activity and attainment of physical fitness; (2) develop motor skills; (3) foster creativity; (4) emphasize safety practices; (5) motivate expression and communication; (6) promote self-understanding and accept-

[2] Knowledge and Understanding in Physical Education, AAHPER (Washington, D.C., 1969).

ance; and (7) stimulate social development. It should include such experiences as basic movement, dance, games, practice in sport skills, stunts, and tumbling work with large and small apparatus. When possible, the program should include aquatics. Each must be so structured that it is interrelated with the others, permitting children to generalize from one learning experience to the next.

7. To deal effectively with the whole child, many styles of teaching must be brought to bear on the learning situation. These include both teacher-directed and self-directed learning. If learning is to be personalized and concerned with the cognitive and affective domains, problem-solving as a teaching strategy becomes vital.

8. To foster the development of generalizations and key concepts, a range of instructional aids as well as teaching styles must be employed. Innovative use of audio-visual materials, large and small group instruction, individual help, and interdisciplinary approaches must all be considered.

9. Opportunity should be provided for participation in organized intramurals and such extramural programs as play days and sports days. These should be designed to serve the purpose of the class instruction phase of the program.

EVALUATION

We believe:

1. Evaluation must be a continuous and vital part of the physical education program. It is used to determine and clarify instructional purposes and to assess individual pupil progress in achieving program objectives.
   a. It is essential in the guidance of children toward the attainment of accept-

able goals and in motivation of children and teachers to bring about needed improvement.

b. It provides the basis for assessing the behavioral response of the learner in relation to the planned learning experience and the development of learning experiences to follow.

c. It should be utilized as one means of interpreting the program to parents and the community in order to provide for a better understanding of educational values and outcomes.

2. A variety of evaluative techniques should be used for determining individual differences and needs of elementary school children. Such techniques should include the use of teacher observation, class discussion, knowledge testing, anecdotal records, motor skill, and physical fitness assessment. The results of the use of these techniques should be interpreted in light of the local situation rather than solely in relation to national norms. It is more important to compare the records of the child's progress than it is to consider the child's rank in relation to other children.

3. Children need to be directly involved in their own on-going evaluations of themselves, their groups, and of the program in relation to the realization of specific behavioral objectives.

TIME ALLOTMENT, CLASS SIZE, TEACHING LOAD, DRESS

We believe:

1. Pupils in elementary school should participate in an instructional program of physical education for at least 150 minutes per week in addition to time allotted for free and/or supervised play.

   a. To best serve the activity needs of children, a daily program is recommended.

b. The length of the class period must be appropriate to the instructional purpose of the lesson and to the needs and maturation of the learner.

c. The time allocated for instruction should be exclusive of time allotted for dressing, showering, recess, free and/or supervised play periods, and noon-hour activities.

2. Groupings for instruction in physical education should be appropriate to the objectives of the lesson being taught, and they should be ordinarily consistent in size with those of other subject areas and/or self-contained classes.

   a. Opportunities for individualizing instruction should be of primary concern in determining class groups.

   b. Class groupings must be flexible enough to provide for differences in interests, levels of maturity, size, abilities, and needs.

3. Consideration of the teaching load is crucial to effective, high-quality teaching. Personnel responsible for scheduling must consider the following factors:

   a. The number of different classes assigned to a physical education teacher in a day is a better criterion for determining teaching load than is the number of hours he teaches.

      For example: The teacher who is teaching 10 or 11 classes in a school day of approximately 5½ hours has a greater load than the one teaching 6 or 7 classes in the same period of time. Planning for and adjusting to a new class every 30 minutes is far more demanding than changing groups every 45 to 50 minutes.

   b. Group or class scheduling should be planned to minimize equipment changes from one class to the next (e.g., scheduling all primary classes in a block of time). It is desirable to leave several minutes open between classes to enable the teacher to talk to individual students, make teaching notes, or confer with the classroom teacher.

c. The physical education teacher needs time to *plan* his program; *coordinate* the total program; *consult* with teachers, principals, other resource teachers, and parents; and to *work* with children needing additional help. Teachers who travel between schools during the day should be given special considerations to assure that they can function effectively as members of the teaching teams in the schools to which they are assigned.

4. Pupils and teachers should be appropriately dressed for the types of activities being conducted in the physical education class. Concern for freedom and quality of movement, as well as for safety, should influence the type of attire worn.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

We believe:

1. Boards of education, through their regular school budget, should provide:
   a. sufficient funds for the maintenance and purchase of supplies and equipment.
   b. adequate facilities and equipment for school and community use.
2. Standards for the purchase of supplies and equipment should be developed jointly by the physical education teachers and the school administration.
3. All children should have many opportunities to participate in physical education activities; a goal of one ball, one rope, etc., per child is realistic for a physical education class. If children are to be physically active and fully experiencing the learning situation, ample equipment and supplies for each child are as essential as pencils and books in the classroom.
4. Sufficient indoor and outdoor facilities, equipment, and supplies should be pro-

vided in each of the elementary schools (e.g., adjustable apparatus which provides for climbing, swinging, jumping, crawling, hanging, and balancing).

5. School and community facilities and programs should be planned and used to supplement each other in serving the needs of children.

6. Blacktopped areas should be properly marked with circles, lines, courts, etc., to permit participation in a wide variety of activities appropriate for various age levels. Play spaces should be designed to permit creative and exploratory types of play. Apparatus should be selected (or created) for its developmental and educational value.[3]

7. Plans for new physical education facilities are the responsibility of the community as well as the school and should be developed in cooperation with physical education teachers, principals, and other resource persons. Personnel involved in planning should be guided by recent developments in instruction as well as construction.[4]

SCHOOL RELATED PROGRAMS

We believe:

1. The physical activity needs of elementary school age children can best be served through a program of instruction in physical education which is supplemented by other opportunities for participation that are provided by school, home, and community.

2. The school-related program should provide opportunities for further development

[3] *Physical Education for Children's Healthful Living*, Association for Childhood Education International (Washington, D.C., 1968).

[4] *Planning Areas and Facilities for Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, Athletic Institute and AAHPER (Chicago, 1965).

of knowledge and skills gained in the instructional physical education program during such periods as recess, noon hour, and extended school-day programs. The program should be differentiated in content and organization to provide for the unskilled child as well as the skilled performer.

3. Extended opportunities for continued participation in sport-type games, dance, gymnastics, and other activities should be offered in the intramural program for all boys and girls. This program usually starts in grade five as the desire for competition and group identification begins to emerge.

4. Competition at the elementary school level is a vital and forceful educational tool. Properly used it can stimulate a keen desire for self-improvement as well as create environments in which children, motivated by common purpose, unite in an effort to accomplish goals in a manner not unlike the roles they will play as adults in a democratic, competitive society. However, to be beneficial, competition must be success-oriented for all children and relevant to the school program. Carefully structured competitive experiences within the school, involving individual and group opportunities and developed and conducted to achieve specific behavioral objectives, are usually more congruent with elementary education goals than inter-school competitive programs.

   If there is a desire to develop a program of inter-school athletic competition for upper elementary school children, it should be considered carefully within the context of relative educational values for children of this age.[5] Such consideration should follow only after a sound physical education program has been provided for all the children in the elementary school as well as an intramural program for the upper elementary grades.

[5] *Desirable Athletic Competition for Children of Elementary School Age*, AAHPER (Washington, D.C., 1968).

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